

and then booster injections of the same dose in saline were given at 4 and 8 weeks. Blood was obtained prior to the first injection and at 2-week intervals thereafter.--

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Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 4, line 14, with the following rewritten paragraph:

-- Figures 7A and 7B show a nucleic acid sequence (SEQ ID NO:15) and predicted amino acid sequence (SEQ ID NO:16) of a hexavalent M protein vaccine.--

In the Claims:

Please amend claims 12, 15-17, 19, 21, 23, 27, 36-38, 40, 42, 44, 54, and 56 to read as follows:

12. (Twice Amended) A recombinant fusion polypeptide, comprising:

(a) an immunogenic portion wherein the immunogenic portion comprises at least two immunogenic polypeptides, the polypeptides comprising at least 10 amino acids and capable of eliciting an immune response against Group A Streptococci; and

(b) a carboxy-terminal polypeptide that protects the immunogenicity of the immunogenic portion, wherein the carboxy-terminal polypeptide is a reiteration of at least one immunogenic polypeptide from the amino-terminal of the immunogenic portion.

15. (Twice Amended) The polypeptide according to claim 12 wherein at least one of the immunogenic polypeptides is from a Group A Streptococci serotype selected from the group consisting of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 11, 12, 13, 14, 18, 19, 22, 24, 28, 30, 48, 49, 52 and 56.

16. (Twice Amended) The polypeptide according to claim 12 wherein the immunogenic portion consists of six immunogenic polypeptides, wherein the polypeptides are an amino-terminal portion of at least one M protein.

17. (Twice Amended) The polypeptide according to any one of claims 12 or 15-16 wherein at least one of the immunogenic polypeptides is from a serotype 11 Group A Streptococci.

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19. (Twice Amended) The polypeptide according to any one of claims 12 or 15-16 wherein at least one of the immunogenic polypeptides is from a serotype 13 Group A Streptococci.

21. (Twice Amended) The polypeptide according to any one of claims 12 or 15-16 wherein at least one of the immunogenic polypeptides is from a serotype 22 Group A Streptococci.

23. (Twice Amended) The polypeptide according to any one of claims 12 or 15-16 wherein at least one of the immunogenic polypeptides is from a serotype 28 Group A Streptococci.

27. (Twice Amended) A composition for promoting an immune response against Group A Streptococci, comprising:

(a) a recombinant fusion polypeptide, comprising:

(i) an immunogenic portion wherein the immunogenic portion comprises at least two immunogenic polypeptides, the polypeptides comprising at least 10 amino acids and capable of eliciting an immune response against Group A Streptococci; and

(ii) a carboxy-terminal polypeptide that protects the immunogenicity of the immunogenic portion, wherein the carboxy-terminal polypeptide is a reiteration of at least one immunogenic polypeptide from the amino-terminal of the immunogenic portion; and

(b) a pharmaceutically acceptable excipient or diluent.

36. (Twice Amended) The composition according to any one of claims 27 or 30-31 wherein at least one of the immunogenic polypeptides is from a Group A Streptococci

serotype selected from the group consisting of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 11, 12, 13, 14, 18, 19, 22, 24, 28, 30, 48, 49, 52 and 56.

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37. (Twice Amended) The composition according to any one of claims 27 or 30-31 wherein the immunogenic portion consists of six immunogenic polypeptides, wherein the polypeptides are an amino-terminal portion of at least one M protein.

38. (Twice Amended) The composition according to any one of claims 27 or 30-31 wherein at least one of the immunogenic polypeptides is from a serotype 11 Group A Streptococci.

40. (Twice Amended) The composition according to any one of claims 27 or 30-31 wherein at least one of the immunogenic polypeptides is from a serotype 13 Group A Streptococci.

42. (Twice Amended) The composition according to any one of claims 27 or 30-31 wherein at least one of the immunogenic polypeptides is from a serotype 22 Group A Streptococci.

44. (Twice Amended) The composition according to any one of claims 27 or 30-31 wherein at least one of the immunogenic polypeptides is from a serotype 28 Group A Streptococci.

54. (Amended) The polypeptide according to any one of claims 12 or 27 wherein only one immunogenic polypeptide is reiterated.

56. (Amended) The polypeptide according to any one of claims 12 or 27 wherein the immunogenic portion consists of ten immunogenic polypeptides, wherein the polypeptides are an amino-terminal portion of a M protein.